

Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA)
Cooperating Agency Meeting
April 12, 2017
Meeting Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE:

Forest Service:

Frank Romero, District Ranger, Laramie RD
Melissa Martin, Planning
Steve Mottus, GIS
Josh Peck, Timber
Michael Salazar, Timber
Tim Douville, Timber
Dave Gloss, Hydrology
Hoyt Meyer, BLM Cadastral Survey
Emma Vakili, Note Taker

Cooperating Agencies:

Casey Whitman, Cheyenne BOPU

Dena Egenhoff, Cheyenne BOPU
Martin Curry, LRCD,
Katie Cheesbrough, WGFD
Carson Engelskirger, WSFD
Justin Williams, WDA
Bobby Compton, WGFD
Rick Huber, WGFD
Mark Conrad, WGFD
Lee Knox, WGFD
Ryan Anderson, WGFD
Jessica Crowder, Governor's Office
Travis Pardue, WSFD
Leanne Correll, SERCD
Sid Fox, Carbon Co. Planning

AGENDA TOPICS

1. Welcome and Project Update by Frank Romero

DISCUSSION

- The objectives of today's meeting are to:
 - Update cooperators
 - Present a preliminary proposed action
 - Strategize for scoping
 - Obtain consensus about the Cooperative Working Agreement (CWA)

2. Cooperating Agency Solicitations: Purpose and Need

DISCUSSION

The 'Need Statements' have been updated for clarity and to reflect comments from cooperating agencies. The new and old lists were presented for comparison and further discussion. The side-by-side P&N comparison was emailed to CAs following the meeting.

- Justin Williams, Dept. of Ag – Suggest changing “promote forest and rangeland conditions to improve wildlife habitat” to include language about forage to more broadly apply to agriculture/grazing.
- Leanne Correll, SERCD – What is entailed by “values” in “values at risk”?
 - This is a commonly used term in the literature
 - Perhaps “resources at risk” would be better. Agree.
- Discussion on the use of the term “management”, alternate terminology discussed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carson Engelskirger, WSFD – Are you comfortable with this purpose and need? It’s very complex compared to what I’m used to seeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The format used here makes sure that we express the fact that the project meets HFRA intent.
CONCLUSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change second bullet under ‘Enhance Forest and Rangeland Resiliency to read, “ “promote forest and rangeland conditions to improve forage and wildlife habitat”.

3. Cooperating Agency Solicitations: Coarse Filters, Coordination Needs, CA Suggestions

DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travis Pardue, WSFD – What about mastication in recommended wilderness? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been told no but are waiting on an answer about chainsaws. Katie Cheesbrough – Old growth was mapped in 2003, it must mean something different now. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no flexibility in the forest plan to move those without an amendment, and we can’t do an amendment on our abbreviated timeline. Many of the Aspen Management Areas are within roadless and not indicated for treatment in your maps. How does this square with the objective of regenerating aspen stands? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of our veg polygons that show aspen cover type are included in treatment opportunity areas. If there are specific areas we should include, please identify them on the maps during breakout sessions.
CONCLUSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are awaiting clarification on what can or cannot be done in recommended wilderness areas Old growth polygons cannot be changed Not all aspen stands are included in treatment opportunity areas. Excluded stands need specific justification for inclusion.

4. Preliminary Proposed Action

DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many roadless areas have existing roads in them, but conditions vary Jessica Crowder, Governor’s Office – I’m uncomfortable with the level of detail and saying we do or don’t support such fine grain things at this point. It feels pre-decisional. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We’re just asking for areas we should look at to analyze moving ahead. It doesn’t mean that they will necessarily be treated, just that they’re worth looking into. Buffers around BLM, state, and private boundaries are all ½ mile to be consistent with other distances allowed for in the HFRA (e.g., distances from WUIs). To include roadless areas as part of the Proposed Action, we need to submit a proposal to the regional office to ask for permission to treat. This has to happen before scoping. The Region does not currently have a roadless review process for landscape-scale projects; consequently, we are working to define a framework. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travis Pardue, WSFD – What is the view on CARs in the roadless areas?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please bring those to our attention so we can include that specifically in our proposal to the region. Also keep in mind that under HFRA we can definitely justify treating for resources at risk but aspen improvement might be more questionable. Collar tracking data might be a good addition to our request. • Paula has created ‘accounting units’, a combination of lynx analysis units and 7th level watersheds to look at limiting treatment acres due to the Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment and hydrologic concerns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We haven’t run the numbers yet because we’re waiting on updated FVS veg data to analyze. A shapefile of the accounting units will be added to the Cloud Vault site.
CONCLUSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting unit shapefile will be added to the Cloud Vault site • Adding roadless areas to our project proposal is more likely to be accepted by the region if we have specific justification for the areas we request. By Friday, April 21, CAs have been asked to submit more detailed information, if necessary, to originally submitted proposals OR to provide additional proposals.

5. Breakout Session Report Outs and Discussion

DISCUSSION
<p>Five breakout groups focused on Watersheds, Forest Resiliency, Fire and Fuels, and Wildlife, along with one general group in Saratoga.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider including CARs within roadless. Private inholdings not within CARs should also be buffered. • Consider including all roadless. Increasing age class diversity across the landscape is limited by removing a 10,000 acre chunk from consideration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Melissa – This would be a really hard sell to the regional office. I can take that back and feel it out but I don’t think it will go over well. ○ Maybe we should look at more heavily roaded roadless areas to use that justification to treat for fuels mechanically. ○ Specifically, the roadless areas east of the Platte River wilderness would be a good consideration for catching fires coming out of the wilderness. We should consider whether treating with fire would require mechanical pre-treatment to be viable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possibility of including a third color to show where mechanical means would only be used to the extent that they could make prescribed burning possible (e.g. building fire lines). • Consider treating in the roadless area in the Savery Creek area to enhance Colorado River Cutthroat trout populations. Fire may not be the best choice in those areas but mechanical treatment could be beneficial. • Consider including a ½ mile buffer on Cheyenne BOPU catchments. • A cover type map would be a helpful addition to the file sharing site.
CONCLUSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how many roads are within roadless areas when proposing to include them • Suggestions for inclusions are drawn on the maps from the breakout sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife migration corridors, cutthroat trout habitat, private land buffers, BOPU catchment buffers

- Cover type map will be added to the file sharing site.

6. Scoping and Public Involvement

DISCUSSION

- Scoping meetings will take place the week of June 5
 - Stock growers' convention is this week in Buffalo. If many other cooperators can't make it we should consider moving it
 - 2 meetings, one in Laramie and one in Saratoga/Encampment
- Format—formal presentation followed by breakout/open house
- Similar maps to display but also catchments and CARs info. Anything else? Roads and if so how many? Streams (third and fourth order)?

CONCLUSION

- Scoping meetings week of June 5. Finalize days based on cooperator and venue availability. Location in Laramie TBD.
- Final decisions on maps at meeting need to be made. Use GIS in presentation? Print transparent overlays for the paper maps?

7. Cooperative Working Agreement (CWA) and Wrap-Up

DISCUSSION

- Add verbiage to 'Forest Service responsibilities' about providing cooperating agencies with timely information and time to provide input.
- Public involvement activities includes meetings but also responses to public comments and responses to scoping.
 - This should be more explicit in the CWA.
- Standing meetings for the second Wednesday of every month with an agenda sent out at least a week in advance
 - Schedule of topics should not be binding.
- **Any input on specific locations to include in our proposal to treat in roadless areas should be submitted by April 21st.**

CONCLUSION

- CWA should make explicit that the Forest Service will provide timely information, that public involvement includes response to comments, and that meeting topics are subject to change but the dates are set in stone.
- Spatial information about roadless areas of interest is due by April 21st
- New GIS layers will be posted by the Forest Service by 4/13

ACTION ITEMS

- Full Forest Service ID team will review the updated Need statements next week; the resulting draft will be sent to cooperators
- Forest Service will post new GIS layers by April 13th
- Input from cooperators on areas of interest in roadless is due April 21st.

Meeting adjourned.